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Tab A to .
IAC-D-6/9
11 February 1955

WATCH COMMITTEE
of the
INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

10 February 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Intelligence Advisory Committee

SUBJECT : 24-Hour Watch for the National Indications Center

1. The National Indications Center (NIC), the joint staff established by the IAC for the support of the IAC Watch Committee, has been placed on a 24-hour, 7-days-a-week watch in view of the present situation in the Formosa-China Coast area. At present this watch is stood by members of the NIC during off-duty hours during the week and over the weekends. The watch roster of NIC personnel has now been augmented by volunteers from several of the IAC agencies as a result of a request by the Chairman of the Watch Committee on 2 February.

2. The above roster watch system is only an emergency solution of the problem of a 24-hour, 7-day-week access to the NIC and the Watch Committee. The problem remains to be dealt with on a permanent basis. Discussion of the problem at the 2 February meeting of the Watch Committee disclosed a difference of opinion among the members as to the desirability of a 24-hour watch in the NIC. Certain members were opposed to any off-duty watch system other than a home telephone watch except during periods of temporarily increased tension. This view was advanced on the ground that the NIC was established to develop and improve techniques of collection, analysis and evaluation of intelligence information containing cumulative indications of Soviet/Communist hostile intentions, and that the handling of indications of immediate hostile action could adequately be started by existing intelligence alert and duty officer systems. According to the present procedure for calling special meetings, the Watch Committee can now meet whenever necessary to carry out its function of analyzing and evaluating both current and cumulative information. If a watch system is to be established, these members felt a change of the Watch Committee-NIC Terms of Reference would be required. Other members felt that the NIC was responsible for the expeditious handling of information indicating possibly immediate action as well as that for longer-range analysis and development, and that only an NIC watch mechanism could adequately meet the need.

3. It was decided at the Watch Committee meeting on 2 February to refer the problem to the IAC for guidance.

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4. a. If it is decided that the NIC is not required to maintain a 24-hour watch, the NIC will resume operations in its normal duty hours: 0800 to 1800 Monday through Friday; 0830 to 1300 Saturdays.

b. If it is decided that the NIC is required to maintain a 24-hour watch, a determination will be required between a watch roster, including volunteers from outside the NIC and NIC personnel, and a permanent watch section of 5 or 6 men as additions to the table of organization of the NIC serving as an alert watch mechanism during both duty and non-duty hours In the meantime, the roster-type watch system will be continued.

5. Advantages of a watch roster, drawing on IAC agencies and the NIC staff for personnel, is its flexibility in response to emergencies; it can be initiated or suspended as circumstances require; and, if there are enough volunteers, will not bear too heavily on any one individual. Among its disadvantages is the requirement for extra duty on the volunteering personnel, many of whom also stand watches in their own organizations.

6. Advantages of a permanent watch section composed of 5 or 6 medium-grade intelligence officers are their substantive continuity in NIC problems, their familiarity with and assured access to other intelligence offices and duty officers, and their capacity to relieve NIC staff members of the necessity for diversion from longer-range development. Disadvantages of this solution include the necessity for increasing the T/O of the NIC by 5 or 6 persons and the difficulty of finding qualified personnel to serve on a schedule predominantly at night.

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C. P. CABELL
Lieutenant General, USAF
Chairman

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